

Poletown Historic District  
Behard Schwartz Cigar Corporation  
2180 E. Milwaukee Ave.  
Detroit  
Wayne  
MI

HABS No. MI-275-9

HABS  
MICH,  
82-DETRO,  
35-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON DC, 20240

STATE Michigan	COUNTY Wayne	TOWN OR VICINITY Detroit
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Poletown Historic District Bernard Schwartz Cigar Corporation (City Directory)		HABS NO. MI-275-9 N.A.
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE D.W.G. Cigar Corporation and D.W. Hacker Company, Inc.		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 2180 E. Milwaukee Avenue, Detroit, Michigan		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1925 Architect's Records (Albert Kahn Inc.)	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Albert Kahn, Inc. (Architectural Plans)	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) The building is primarily of historical significance for its integral involvement in Detroit's early labor movement. The factory relied on a large female labor force extracted from the surrounding Polish community. In 1937, the Schwartz Cigar factory was the scene of a lengthy sit-down strike, which ended in the strikers' violent expulsion during (Cont'd on Pg		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Industrial		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Steel frame and masonry wall construction.		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) Refer to attached floorplans on pages 4 and 5.		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE The building was designed with a refined simplicity in order to facilitate function. Brick infills between each floor level are detailed at their horizontal limits by dentil coursings. The only other exterior feature of note is the classically ornamented door frame of the main entryway.		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) The only interior feature of note are the classical pilasters in several of the first floor offices.		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES In 1955 a renovation of the first floor shipping room, designed by the architect George Head, was completed for the D.W.G. Cigar Corporation. During the years 1959 and 1960, the first floor offices underwent remodeling. For this design also, Geo. Head was commissioner.		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE The building was most recently occupied by a printing firm, the D.W. Hacker Company. The building is presently scheduled for demolition in 1981.		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDE LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.)  (SEE ATTACHED SHEET)		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Theron Francis, William Kessler and Associates, Inc.		DATE July 20, 1981

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

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POLETOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT (Bernard  
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SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

an unauthorized Detroit Police raid. The protests culminated in the famed  
Cadillac Square Rally.

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POLETOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT (Bernard  
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HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE: Bernard Schwartz Cigar Corporation

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

I. Book

1. Babson, Steve and Elsila, Dave, Union Town: A Labor History Guide to Detroit. Detroit: Workers Education Local 189, N.D.

II. Manuscript

1. Johnson, Christopher H., "A Forgotten World: The Women Cigar Workers of Detroit's Central Industrial Park." (Unpublished manuscript) N.D.

III. Reference Materials

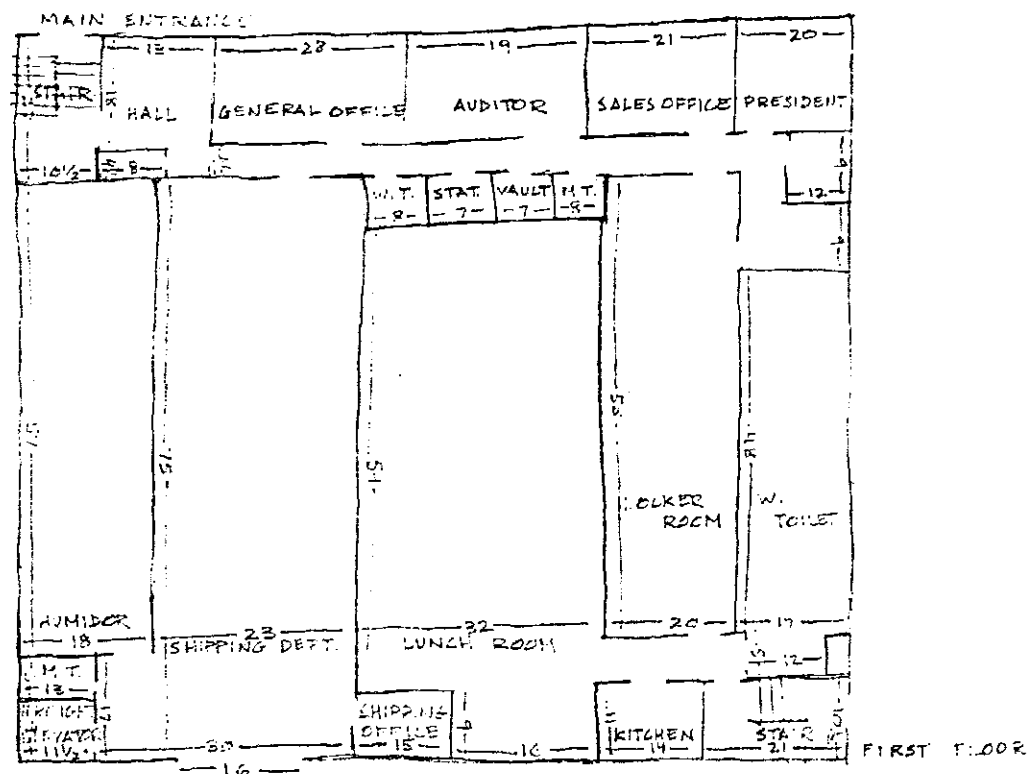
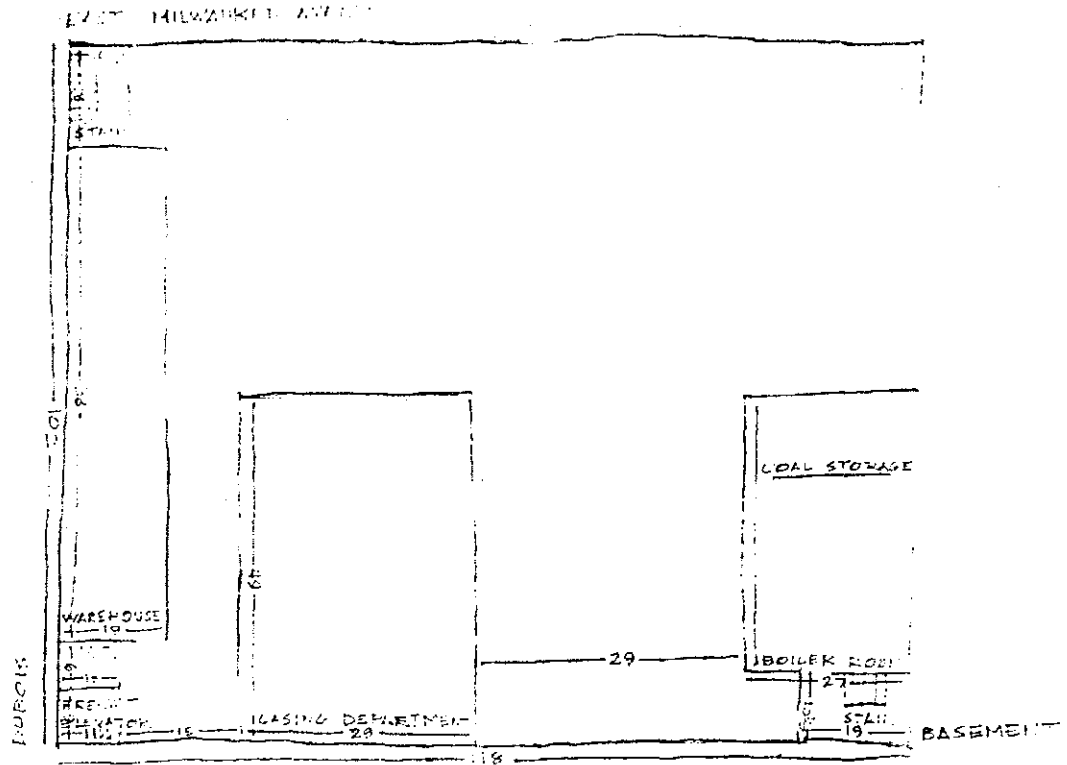
1. Building Permits, City of Detroit
2. City Directory, R.L. Polk and Company. Detroit. (Vols. 1920-1974)

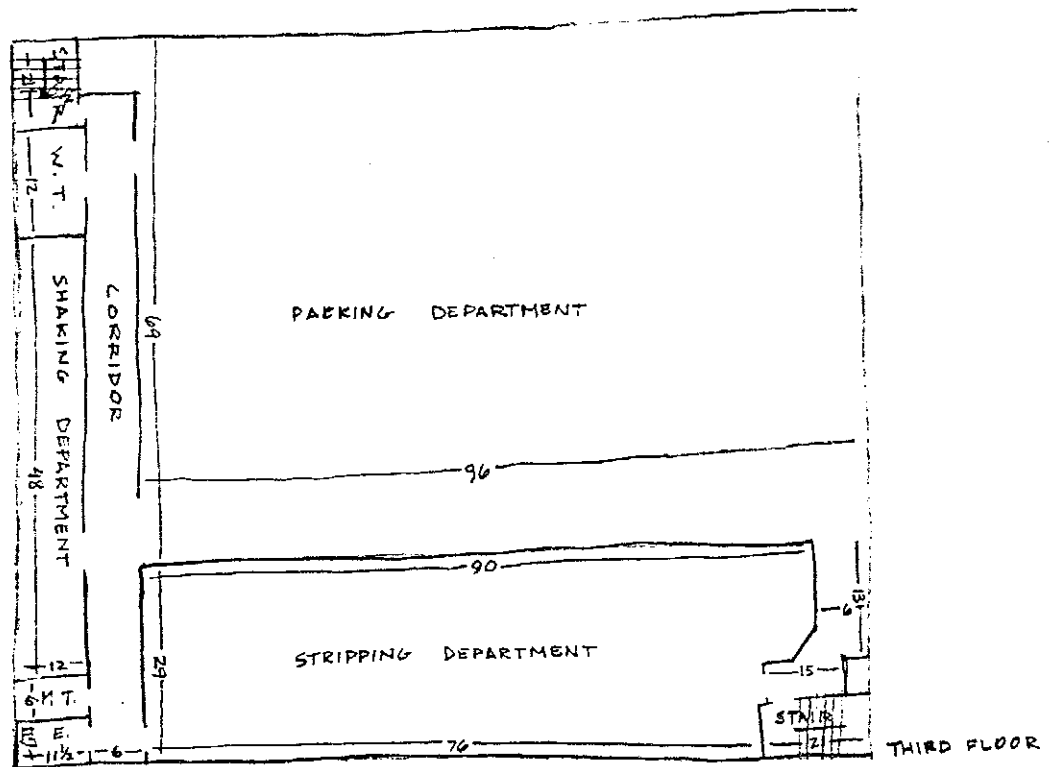
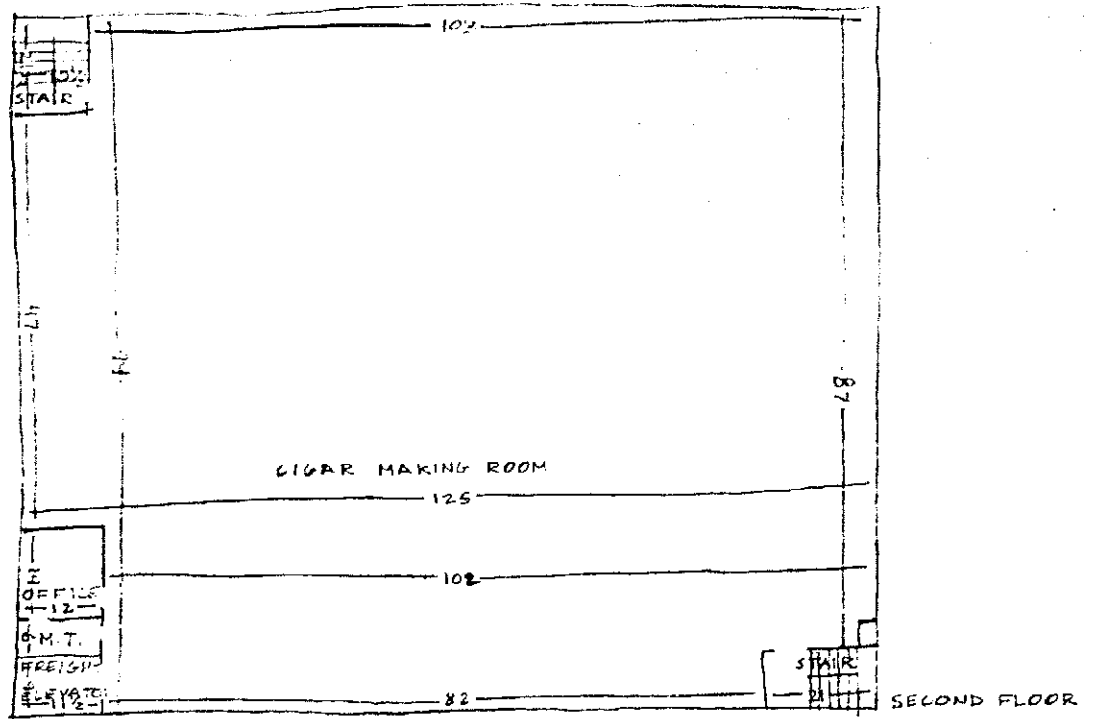
IV. Architectural Drawings

1. Albert Kahn, Inc., Architect's Plans, 1924.
2. George Pelham Head, Inc., Architect's Plans, 1954, 1958, 1959, 1961.

V. Interview

1. Ron Alpern, Labor History Society.





FOURTH FLOOR SAME AS SECOND

1. Property Name

Bernard Schwartz Cigar Company

2. Location

Street Address: 2180 E. Milwaukee, Detroit, Michigan

The Bernard Schwartz Cigar Company is located at the southwest corner at the intersection of Milwaukee Avenue and Dubois Street. The property is north of the Ford Expressway (I-94) and south of Detroit's Central Industrial Park.

3. Classification

Building

4. Ownership

City of Detroit - Community and Economic Development Department

5. Representation of Existing Surveys

None

6. Description

The Bernard Schwartz Cigar Company building is a four-story structure with a basement. It is rectangular in plan and uses steel-framed reinforced concrete construction with red brick infill facing. The only notable aspect of architectural detailing on this industrial building are the dentils which appear below each row of windows. The design of the structure emphasizes an austere symmetry committed to industrial function.

7. Significance

The Bernard Schwartz Cigar Company is primarily significant for its involvement in Detroit's labor movement during the 1930's.

Mechanization and the depression had resulted in a series of paycuts and longer hours for the Schwartz Cigar Company's workforce of Polish women. On February 16, 1937, after all other efforts to redress their grievances had failed, occupation of the building, along with four other factories, began. The sitdowns were among the longest and most bitter in the city.

On March 16th, the Detroit Police acted without court authorization and stormed the Bernard Schwartz Cigar Company in an effort to evict the women sitdowners. A floor-by-floor battle ensued, and fighting broke out in the street between police and hundreds of sympathetic unionists, friends and relatives. Considerable community support developed and sustained the strike until it was settled in late April.